

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM

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Lecture Outline

International Communism

I. Introduction

1. Communism is different from most international political movements in the very fact that it is centrally organized.
2. The principal control device used by the organization is Marxist doctrine.

II. History

1. The First and Second Internationals were not satisfactory.
2. Lenin established the Third International, extending to the international organization his concept of the party.
3. The Statutes of the Comintern called for an international revolution on the Bolshevik pattern, but political conditions between 1919 and 1939 forced successive revisions of policy.
4. The Third International was finally dissolved in 1943.
5. The Cominform was established in 1947. This organization
 - a. Exchanges information among the national Communist parties
 - b. Communicates policy among the parties
6. Information and policy are also communicated by
 - a. Exchange of fraternal delegates among party congresses
 - b. Clandestine regional meetings
 - c. International front organizations
 - d. Private travel of individual Communists
 - e. Exchange of party publications
 - f. Interparty financial aid
7. Summary and Conclusions

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International Communism

The most important fact about international communism is the fact that it is an organization. Fascism and democracy have existed in more than one country; but there is no liaison or direct contact between Fascist or Democratic parties as such and as distinct from their governments. Communist parties throughout the world, however, are controlled and organized from a single center. We shall review the ways in which these parties have been organized and controlled in the past, and examine the way in which they are now controlled and organized.

It is estimated that there are about 20,000,000 Communists in the world, about 3,700,000 of them in non-Soviet areas. In considering the control the Soviet Union exercises over these people, we shall be deceived if we expect only clandestine or spectacular methods. We must think of a Communist as one who accepts Marxist doctrine, and voluntarily submits to party discipline. This is the only weapon the Soviet Union has in areas where it is not in political control; but it is a strong weapon, and its force is felt by some even outside the party: Marxism is the official ideology of one of the world's most powerful nations, which extends to other nations a Utopian message, promising to end social and political injustice and to do away with economic inequality, providing certainty in a period of confusion to Communists and non-Communists.

The First International (1864-1876) and the Second (1889-1923), though they form part of the history of the Communist movement, were not really Communist Internationals in the sense in which we understand the term today. They were never clearly controlled by any single faction long enough and consistently enough to establish a genuine international policy, and were

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characterized by a constant conflict between theory and practice. This fact led Marx to effect the dissolution of the First International, and caused Lenin to establish the Third, the Communist International (Comintern), a genuine international of Communist parties, before the Second had ceased to exist.

What enabled him to do this successfully?

The Communist revolution in Russia in 1917 gave enormous prestige to Bolshevism at a time when the old political organization of Europe seemed about to go down in defeat, and society appeared ready to be drastically reorganized. Communist movements appeared in many countries (the most successful in Hungary), and the Comintern was established by Lenin in 1919 to unite these various national movements: It extended into the international sphere Lenin's doctrine of the party: a centrally controlled, ideologically motivated and unified organization, rather than a number of disunited and spontaneous local movements. The Statutes of the Comintern, adopted at the Second Comintern Congress (17 July - 7 August, 1920) state in part: "The new International Association of Workers is established for the purpose of organizing common activity of the workers of various countries who are striving towards a single aim: the overthrow of capitalism; the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the International Soviet Republic; the complete abolition of classes, and the realization of socialism-- the first step of Communist Society."

Political developments of the post-war period, however, did not justify the evident expectation of the Bolsheviks that these aims would be achieved quickly. During the 1920's peace was gradually reestablished, and the level of economic prosperity was at least bearable in all but a few countries; and

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where things were particularly bad the drift was toward Fascism rather than Communism, a drift which had become firmly set by the early '30s. As a consequence of this, and the increasing emphasis on the internal development of the USSR by Stalin, the immediate revolutionary objective of the Comintern was gradually modified, and policy was changed at successive World Congresses until the Seventh (1935), which explicitly prescribed United Front tactics wherever applicable, and even the infiltration of organizations hostile to Communism, as opposed to the previous policy of isolation and aloofness, and the tactic of seeking to cause splits in parties which might have been sought as allies, particularly Socialist parties.

The Organization and Function of the Comintern:

The World Congress (there were seven from 1919 to 1935) elected the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) and the International Control Commission (ICC). The principle functions of the ECCI were: 1. To approve or disapprove the political programs of the sections (the national parties). Sections could appeal ECCI decisions to the next World Congress. 2. To issue binding directives to the sections for implementation. Sections could appeal ECCI directive to the next World Congress. 3. To annul or amend decisions of National Party Congresses and national Central Committees. 4. To expel sections, groups, or individuals who violated the program, rules, or decisions of the Comintern. 5. To accept affiliation of parties or other organizations sympathetic to Communism; to accept resignations. 6. To supervise the creation of illegal apparatus on the national level. 7. To levy dues on all sections.

The CPSU, as the model party of the world (it was the one successful party) provided "ideological guidance and tactical experience."

When the Comintern was dissolved in 1943, the following official reasons

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were given: 1. Centralized leadership of the world movement was meeting insuperable obstacles in internal and international complications. 2. The war had divided the world, consequently the Communist movement, into two camps, each with an essentially different mission. 3. The Seventh World Congress had in 1935 recommended the adaptation of party activities to local conditions, and avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of the national parties. 4. Marxism discards obsolete forms of organization. 5. The development of the political maturity of the national parties and their leading organizations. We have every reason to believe that this was in fact an accurate estimate of the situation on the part of the Soviet leaders. The war had in fact made international conditions extremely difficult; and the systematic Marxist education of the leading Communists of the world had been carried forward, in Russia and elsewhere, for a great many years. International Communism had reached a stage at which it could be controlled by a more flexible technique than the rigid control represented in the Comintern.

The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), the current international Communist organization, was established in Warsaw in 1947, at an "informational Conference" of the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria (The Bulgarian Labor Party), Hungary, Rumania, Poland (The Polish Labor Party), the USSR, Czechoslovakia, France, and Italy. The representatives of these parties expressed the opinion that greater cohesion between them was needed for the exchange of experience and the coordination of their activities, in view of which they agreed to the following: 1. To form an Information Bureau consisting of representatives of the Central Committees of the Parties at the conference (two representatives from each CC); 2. To organize an exchange of experience among these parties, and in case of necessity to coordinate activity on a basis of mutual agreement; 3. To publish a journal for the Informations

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Bureau: For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy! 4. To establish headquarters in Belgrade (now Bucharest).

It is evident that the Cominform is by no means a mere organizational copy of the Comintern. It is an organization of sensitive key parties in an area where it is helpful to the Soviet Union to have such an organization: in the Soviet Orbit and Western Europe (in 1947 France and Italy, with Czechoslovakia, were very encouraging prospects from the Soviet point of view). The question of the organizational jurisdiction outside this area has received no definite answer from Communist sources. Duclos said (on 27 October 1947), "The Communist parties which were not present at the founding conference. . . have, of course, the possibility of making any intervention that they judge necessary to the Bureau of Information both concerning coordination of an action on the basis of full agreement, and in connection with a request for admission to the Bureau of Information." So far, however, there have been no additional affiliations to the Cominform.

It is clear, however, if we follow the trends in the Communist press throughout the world, that the Cominform does exercise its double function for the international movement as a whole: It serves as an information gathering mechanism for international Communism, and it apparently sets policy for the whole movement.

Information: The Cominform is in a position to collect and process both information on national party status and progress, and political, social, and economic conditions in the nations where Communist parties exist. Since each national party maintains its own information bureau, the Cominform need simply pool and evaluate the total. It is only safe to assume the existence of clandestine communications of some sort, such as maritime couriers; but their existence does not alter the essential picture.

Policy: The chief responsibility for dissemination of policy to the

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movement lies with the editorial board of the Cominform journal, For a Lasting Peace. This journal deals with basic party problems, such as organizational problems or correct ideological interpretations; and with tactical matters through coverage of specific problems and how they have been met: Israel, for instance, or the Marshall Plan.

It would be absurd to suppose that all the business of International Communism is carried on in the pages of the Cominform journal. This would be neither possible nor necessary. For while the grand strategy of the movement is based upon the concept of world revolution, the day-to-day business of the parties boil down to specific practical local issues: How to recruit members, how to increase circulation of party publications, whether it would be profitable to infiltrate a specific organization or agency, the advisability of a particular political alliance. These problems can be handled most efficiently at the national level, or by regional agreements of national parties, without specific directives in all cases from the Soviet Union (though it must be remembered that such specific directives are evoked when necessary, as in the case of Czechoslovakia's desire to participate in the Marshall Plan); and it was pointed out in connection with the dissolution of the Comintern that the Soviet leadership is aware that the leaders of the national parties have reached a level of "political maturity" at which they can be allowed a certain independence in purely local matters (Tito has proved an exception to this). Inter-party coordination is effected outside the Cominform, then, in the following ways:

1. Exchange of fraternal delegates between national party congresses (the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, in March 1946, was attended by leading party members/^{from} France, England, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland,

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and Austria). These fraternal delegates participate in the public discussions of the Congresses, and undoubtedly also in confidential conversations which would normally take place to settle and tactical matters, and questions of policy.

2. Clandestine regional meetings: Leaders of geographically related parties (Latin America or Western Europe, for example) meet frequently at unadvertised meetings. One such meeting occurred in Hamburg in April, 1947, attended by German and Danish Communist leaders; another in Oslo in February, 1948, attended by Communists from Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Both meetings were held to discuss regional problems.

3. International front organizations (WFTU, WFDY, etc) provide, at their overt meetings and congresses, opportunity for discussions between the various national factions.

4. Private travel of individual Communists: Verbal rather than written instructions are naturally preferred on important matters, for security reasons; and such instructions are communicated on a high level. Private travel of important Communists in the post-war period was reached considerable proportions. The American Communist William Z Foster, for instance, attended the Nineteenth Congress of the CPGB in February, 1947, with Tim Buck (National Executive, Labor Progressive Party of Canada). Shortly after his arrival in the UK he had a conference with Emile Touma, the delegate from the Arab League of National Liberation. Foster and Buck went to France in March, where several important meetings were held at Party headquarters in Paris. One of these meetings was attended by Dolores Ibarruri, Secretary General of the CP of Spain, Nina Popova, Executive Officer of the International Federation of Democratic Women and of the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Women, N. Mikhailov, Executive Officer of the World Federation of

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Democratic Youth and the Russian Young Communist League, and the French Communists Thorez, Marty, Duclos, Mauvais, Cachin, Berlioz, Frachon, Monmousseau and Fajon. On 13 March, Foster and Buck proceeded to Rome, and from 17 to 24 March were in Yugoslavia. Foster also visited Prague and Warsaw, and he also had a Hungarian visa.

5. Interchange of Party publications, which can be accomplished overtly, through the mails.

6. Interparty financial aid: Direct Soviet financing is not encouraged, but inter-party financial activity seems to be fairly common.

7. Clandestine communication undoubtedly exists, but as has been pointed out above, it does not alter the picture significantly.

Summary and Conclusions

The Cominform apparatus means decentralization and flexibility, a certain amount of organizational (not command) independence in the solution of local and regional tactical problems. The various parties remain in close consultative touch with each other, engaged in constant exchange of information, and render one another mutual assistance. Though these relations may be formalized, as in the case of the exchange of fraternal delegates to national congresses, they are also informal, such as private travel of individuals or the exchange of Party publications.

Through the Cominform journal, For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy!, the USSR conveniently and overtly disseminates its current position on Organizational ideological, and tactical problems to all the Communist Parties of the world. The basis of loyalty among the foreign CPs to the Soviet Government is assumed as a consequence of their acceptance

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of Marxist doctrine as interpreted by the Soviet Communist leaders, and by their submission to Party discipline. And this loyalty has been strengthened by the fact that most of the present Party leaders throughout the world were thoroughly trained in Communism over a long period of time in Russia, thus making possible the exercise of adequate ideological control, almost entirely through over media.

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These are the principle international Communist Fronts:

- International Association of Democratic Lawyers
- World Peace Council
- Women's International Democratic Federation
- International Union of Students
- World Federation of Democratic Youth
- World Federation of Trade Unions
- International Organization of Journalists

The International Association of Democratic Lawyers has a large membership through affiliation with national groups, some of which are distinctly non-Communist, in Austria, Germany, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Rumania, Switzerland, USSR, Ukraine, and Czechoslovakia. It was founded in 1946, and by its own statement cooperates closely with the World Peace Council, the WFTU, the WIDF, and the IUS. It has issued one prominent publication entitled "Law in the Service of Peace". Its activity consists largely of appeals to the UN and to other organizations, whether Communist or not, to take note of its findings in Korea.

The World Peace Council. This is one of the largest Communist International fronts. It was organized at a meeting in Paris in June 1946, which was at the time regarded by American observers as a failure. Its principal successes to date are the Stockholm Peace Appeal, which was signed by more than two million Americans, and its enlistment of the support of intellectual leaders such as Joliot-Curie. The history of the World Peace Council is in itself a study in Soviet tactics. This history cannot be set forth here in detail but the following points are important:

1. The interlocking use of key members of other Communist international organizations on the Executive Bureau; for example, Eugenie Cotton, who is president of the WIDF, and Louis Saillant, Secretary-General of the WFTU.

2. The use of writers and intellectuals such as Ehrenburg.

3. The organization of national peace committees subservient to the WPC.

4. Its conscious appeal to non-Communist organizations on specific issues. For example, at its last meeting it decided:

"to contact the movement of mondialists in different countries in order to ascertain on what questions agreement can be reached;

"to meet with the Quakers with the object of finding terms for joint actions;

"to acquaint churches with our stand on disarmament and ask them to support these resolutions alone regardless of their approval or disapproval of other points in our program;

"to develop contact with movements in favor of neutrality in different countries;

"to find ways of cooperation with pacifist movements; and

"to enlist the support of national independence movements and patriotic sentiments, such as Egypt."

The last meeting of the WPC, held in Vienna in December, 1952, was estimated to cost the Soviet 10,000,000 Austrian shillings.

Women's International Democratic Federation. Unlike most of the Soviet international fronts, the WIDF contains no national member organizations which are not under Communist control. Its charter, however,

is a very broad one. It stands for the eradication of Fascism, the collaboration of nations for peace, the defense of the political, economic, legal and social rights of women, the safeguarding of public health, with particular reference to children, and the preservation of social conditions suitable to the physical, moral, and intellectual development of the young. It has never issued a single broadside which deviated in any respect from the Communist line.

In May 1951, 22 of its members investigated the atrocities in Korea and published their findings. At its meeting in Vienna in April 1952, it came out strongly against American warmongers and cited the superior environment for children in the USSR and satellites. Its monthly bulletin, Women of the World, is occupied almost entirely by the current peace campaign.

The International Union of Students. Next to the WPC and the WFTU, the IUS is the Soviet's largest and most expensive front. It publishes two monthly magazines, one of which in format, make-up and attractiveness would do credit to American commercial organizations. Until very recently the IUS, largely on the appeal of "student unity", enlisted the active participation of nearly every student organization in the world, most of them non-Communist. Since 1948 there has been a small falling off in the membership, but the IUS still represents about 5,000,000 students from 71 countries, and continually emphasizes that it is the only representative international student organization. It is still accepted as such by many non-Communist student groups, especially in the under-developed areas. Its publications, which are widely read throughout all of Western Europe and in other areas, follow the general Communist line of peace, bacteriological warfare, Western rearmament, etc. It was organized in 1945.

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Of similar size is the World Federation of Democratic Youth, also organized in 1945. Its original headquarters in London has now been moved to Budapest. Where the IUS is calculated to appeal to intellectuals, particularly in the underdeveloped areas where education is for the relatively few, the WFDY is a mass movement. Its publications are not slick, but it has a radio station, and "Youth speaks to Youth" several times a week in Indonesian, Japanese, Vietnamese, English, Burmese, and French. Its principal activity has been the sponsorship of three large youth rallies, the most famous of which took place in Berlin in 1951. 25,000 young people were brought from all over the world, fed, housed, and harangued. Sports events and parades were organized on a scale reminiscent of the Nazi youth rallies. Films of American atrocities in Korea were shown, and civilians purporting to have been tortured and maimed by American soldiers, were put on exhibition.

The World Federation of Trade Unions. This organization is well-known to Americans because the CIO once belonged to it. Its headquarters is in Vienna, and it has offices in Peiping, Latin America, and Africa, as well as Western Europe. It still controls the powerful CGT in France, the CGIL in Italy, as well as the CTAL and PPTC in China and the satellites. There are more than 300 persons employed at its headquarters, and its propaganda output is vast, much larger for example than that of the CIO and AF of L's combined output to American trade unionists.

Nearly all national labor organizations maintain affiliation with international bodies. Since the failure of the CIO, together with other democratic unions, to restore a balance of power inside the WFTU, there have been four large international groupings: The WFTU; the International

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Confederation of Free Trade Unions, set up by those democratic unions which withdrew from the WFTU; the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CISC); and the fourth body not presently formalized but consisting of a rather loose grouping of large numbers of unions in South America under the influence of Peron.

The major division in the international labor movement exists by reason of the Communist issue. The strength of the WFTU in this struggle is not only its total membership of 70 million as compared to the 50 million represented in the ICFTU and the 2,400,000 in the CISC, but in the fact that only half the WFTU membership lies within the Soviet orbit, and the remaining half lies outside the Iron Curtain, dispersed through some 57 countries. The ICFTU, which is represented in 66 countries, and the CISC in 17, have no membership at all behind the curtain. The advantage is obvious, and the Communists have used it to the full.

The International Organization of Journalists was founded in Copenhagen in 1946 by a non-Communist majority in order "to protect the liberty of the press and of journalists, the people's right to be informed freely and accurately, to promote international friendship and the free exchange of information, and to promote trade unionism among journalists." In 1947, when it met again at Prague, the Communists took advantage of a lack of preparation and indifference among the non-Communist delegations, and maneuvered themselves into control, voting to transfer the headquarters and funds to Prague, and, despite the fact that the presidency was still held by a British journalist, and one of the vice-presidencies by a U.S. journalist, to put the organization squarely behind the World Peace program. Since then, British and U.S. officers have resigned.

VOKS. There are other Soviet organizations which, while they cannot be classified as fronts in the historic sense are nevertheless active forces with which we have to deal. Among them, for example, are the Russian Orthodox Church, which has traditional ties in foreign regions of interest to Moscow, the various Slavic committees which have been set up in Moscow to maintain ties in Iron Curtain countries, and most important of all, the organization known as VOKS, or "All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries".

VOKS attempts to wear the transparent mask of a "private society" in Russia rather than a government bureau. It is always headed by an intellectual of some distinction in the Soviet Union, never by a bureaucrat. As a "private" group, however, VOKS plays an important role in front activity by maintaining close liaison with Soviet friendship societies in various countries, by inviting distinguished foreign intellectuals to visit Moscow on conducted tours, and by maintaining the fiction that Soviet intellectuals, whom it offers on return visits, may not be totally subservient to the Soviet line. Thus it was VOKS which first proposed the tour of Ehrenburg to the US, where presumably he could form his own independent view and state his impressions to Americans, and it was VOKS which sent 3,000 Soviet artists in teams of two or three men — a violinist and a piano player for example — to sixty countries in the world during 1945 demonstrating the high state of Soviet culture and the superiority of the intellectual climate in Russia. VOKS also distributes a quarter of a million books and pamphlets each year at a price under cost.